

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An in vitro method of screening an individual who is suspected of having primary and/or metastatic ~~stomach or~~ esophageal cancer for primary and/or metastatic ~~stomach or~~ esophageal cancer cells comprising the steps of examining a sample of extraintestinal tissue and/or body fluids from said an individual to determine whether guanylin cyclase C GCC is being expressed by cells in said sample wherein expression of said guanylin cyclase C is expressed in GCC indicates a possibility of primary and/or metastatic ~~stomach or~~ esophageal cancer cells present in said sample.
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein expression of guanylin cyclase C GCC by said cells is determined by detecting the presence of guanylin cyclase C GCC gene transcription product.
3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein expression of guanylin cyclase C GCC by said cells is determined by polymerase chain reaction wherein said sample is contacted with primers that selectively amplify guanylin cyclase C GCC gene transcript or cDNA generated therefrom.
4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein expression of guanylin cyclase C GCC by said cells is determined by immunoassay wherein said sample is contacted with antibodies that specifically bind to guanylin cyclase C GCC gene translation product.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said sample is body fluid.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said sample is blood.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said sample is lymphatic tissue and/or fluid.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said sample is a lymph node sample.
9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the individual has previously been diagnosed with having ~~stomach or~~ esophageal cancer.
10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the individual has previously been diagnosed with and treated for ~~stomach or~~ esophageal cancer

11. (Currently Amended) An in vitro method of screening an individual suspected of having primary and/or metastatic ~~stomach or~~ esophageal cancer for evidence of the presence of primary and/or metastatic ~~stomach or~~ esophageal cancer cells comprising the steps of examining a sample of extraintestinal tissue and/or body fluids from said an individual to determine whether guanylin cyclase C GCC gene transcription or translation product is present in said sample wherein the presence of guanylin cyclase C GCC gene transcription and or translation products are present in product in said sample indicates that the individual may have primary and/or metastatic ~~stomach or~~ esophageal cancer cells, in said sample.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10 comprising the steps of examining a sample of extraintestinal tissue and/or body fluids from an individual to determine whether guanylin cyclase C GCC gene transcription product is present in said sample.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12 wherein the presence of guanylin cyclase C GCC gene transcription product is determined by polymerase chain reaction wherein said sample is contacted with primers that selectively amplify guanylin cyclase C GCC gene transcript or cDNA generated therefrom.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the presence of guanylin cyclase C GCC gene translation product is determined by immunoassay wherein said sample is contacted with antibodies that specifically bind to guanylin cyclase C GCC gene translation product.

15. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said sample is body fluid.

16. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said sample is blood.

17. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said sample is lymphatic tissue and/or fluid.

18. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said sample is a lymph node sample.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the individual has previously been diagnosed with having ~~stomach or~~ esophageal cancer.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the individual has previously been diagnosed with and treated for ~~stomach or~~ esophageal cancer

21. (Currently Amended) An in vitro method of confirming that a tumor cell removed from a patient suspected of having ~~stomach or~~ esophageal cancer cells is a ~~stomach or~~ esophageal tumor cell comprising the step of determining whether a tumor cell expresses guanylin cyclase C GCC wherein expression of guanylin cyclase C GCC indicates that the tumor cell is a ~~stomach or~~ esophageal tumor cell.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21 wherein expression of guanylin cyclase C GCC by said tumor cell is determined by detecting the presence of guanylin cyclase C GCC gene transcription product.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21 wherein expression of guanylin cyclase C GCC by said tumor cell is determined by polymerase chain reaction wherein mRNA from said tumor cell or cDNA generated therefrom is contacted with primers that selectively amplify guanylin cyclase C GCC gene transcript or cDNA generated therefrom.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21 wherein expression of guanylin cyclase C GCC by said tumor cell is determined by immunoassay wherein protein from said tumor cell is contacted with antibodies that specifically bind to guanylin cyclase C GCC gene translation product.

25-28 (Cancelled)

29. (Currently Amended) A method of diagnosing an individual who has esophageal cancer comprising the steps of examining a sample of esophagus tissue to detect the presence of guanylin cyclase C GCC transcript or translation product wherein the presence of guanylin cyclase C GCC transcript or translation product in an esophageal sample indicates esophageal cancer.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29 comprising the steps of examining said sample of esophageal tissue to determine whether guanylin cyclase C GCC gene transcription product is present in said sample.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30 wherein the presence of guanylin cyclase C GCC gene transcription product is determined by polymerase chain reaction wherein said sample is contacted with primers that selectively amplify guanylin cyclase C GCC gene transcript or cDNA generated therefrom.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29 wherein the presence of guanylin cyclase C GCC gene translation product is determined by immunoassay wherein said sample is contacted with antibodies that specifically bind to guanylin cyclase C GCC gene translation product.

33-38 (Cancelled)

39. (New). The method of claim 1 wherein expression of said guanylin cyclase C by said cells is determined by detecting guanylin cyclase C gene translation product in said sample.

40. (New). The method of claim 11 wherein the presence of guanylin cyclase C gene translation product in said sample is detected.

41. (New). A method of diagnosing an individual who has esophageal cancer comprising the steps of:

contacting esophageal tissue of said individual with a conjugated compound that comprises a guanylin cyclase C binding moiety linked to a photoactivate imaging agent, exposing said esophageal tissue to light to activate any photoactive imaging agent of said conjugated compound bound to said esophageal tissue; and determining whether any activated photoactive imaging agent of said conjugated compound bound to said esophageal tissue; wherein the presence of activated photoactive imaging agent of said conjugated compound bound to said esophageal tissue is indicative of esophageal cancer.

42. (New). The method of claim 41 wherein said esophageal tissue is contacted with the conjugated compound by administering said compound to said esophageal tissue by an intraoperative spray.